



Representative
Geoff Simpson



47th Legislative District

Mid-Session Review 2007

Dear Neighbor,

As I write this, we are over halfway through the 2007 legislative session and we're scheduled to adjourn April 22nd.

One of our first orders of business was to fulfill our promise to guarantee health care access for all of Washington's children by the year 2010. We've already passed and signed into law legislation providing health care to 38,000 more kids without coverage.

To my surprise, most House Republicans opposed this. But then again, 33 of them even voted against preventing discrimination against those with disabilities through a definition change. Twenty two voted against insurance coverage for mental health conditions—13 even voted against insurance covering colorectal cancer screening.

With a strong state economy, Gov. Chris Gregoire outlined a balanced, responsible budget that is especially notable for investing in our future by making much-needed improvements in education funding.

I have led efforts to dedicate more funding to care for seniors and those with disabilities.

Our House proposed budget is both balanced and puts over \$600 million into reserves – very much unlike the Bush Administration's budget, which has been increasing the national debt \$1.87 billion a day!

Our community's growth has brought many transportation needs, and I've been fighting for them on the House Transportation Committee.

We need to keep all of Washington moving. Endless delay in replacing the Alaskan Way Viaduct in Seattle must stop so other projects can receive the attention they deserve. I'm also a strong supporter of transportation performance audits to ensure taxpayers get the best return-on-investment.

As chair of the House Local Government Committee, I have stopped efforts by the big developers to allow unmanaged sprawl, and stopped their efforts to shift the cost burden for growth to taxpayers.

As a member of the House Insurance, Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection Committee, I worked on legislation that passed the House to protect drivers by guaranteeing them the opportunity for money-saving arbitration over personal injury terms of their insurance policies.

And after my bill to stop Wal-Mart from blurring the lines between commerce and regulated banking passed the House 96-0 on March 14th, Wal-Mart announced it would stop plans to expand into interstate banking. Consumers and Washington's independent banks looked to us for help in blocking the predatory destruction of consumer choice.

I am pleased by what has happened to date, but in this fast-moving session I need your input. Please always feel free to write, call, or drop by if you are in Olympia, with e-mail usually the best way get in touch. I am honored to represent you!

Best,

Geoff



**Rep. Geoff Simpson and
legislative page Bryce Phillips of Kent**

Every week new legislative pages arrive in Olympia to learn about the Legislature, while at the same time aiding representatives. In March, I was delighted to sponsor Bryce Phillips, a young man I've known for years.

Bryce was riding his bike last summer when he was hit by a car. I was on-duty at the fire station that day and was in the first truck on the scene. He was in bad shape, but he is a fighter and pulled through wonderfully to full recovery. It was a great honor to work with Bryce down in the Legislature.

Mid-Session Review 2007

Some Other Issues I'm Taking a Lead On

Preventing Fires



As a firefighter, I have seen firsthand the devastating effects of fire in buildings without fire sprinklers. But fire sprinklers are no protection if those installing them are untrained in proper installation.

There are over 2,000 types of fire sprinklers. Those installing these life-saving devices should be trained, able to read blueprints, and have a certificate of competency. My bill will require this by January 1, 2009.

✓ *HB 1968 passed the House with 74 votes (23 Republicans voted no)*

Ensuring Ethical Government

As a former City Council member, I know how important it is that the public have full confidence that their tax dollars are spent for the greater good and not spent toward hidden agendas or self-interest. My House Bill 1255 prohibits municipal officers from benefiting in any personal service contract that is made by, through, or under the supervision of that officer.

✓ *HB 1255 passed the House 95-0.*

Preventing Housing Discrimination

My House Bill 1148 prevents cities, towns, and counties from barring older mobile and manufactured homes access to existing mobile home parks and manufactured housing communities. Many seniors, and those with limited incomes living in mobile homes, are not fortunate enough to be able to afford a house, while many others own their mobile homes and have lived in them for years. Every citizen of Washington state should have the assurance that they cannot be discriminated against in their housing choices.

✓ *HB 1148 passed the House 97-0*



Combating Auto Theft

Auto thefts are “gateway” crimes that frequently lead to other criminal deviancy, and it is ridiculous to wait until someone steals a car the seventh time before giving them hard time. Anyone who has ever had a car stolen knows how violated they felt – auto thefts are not “joyrides” for the victims. Preventing this victimization is worth the significant investment in criminal justice costs. I am co-sponsoring HB 1001 which greatly increases penalties for auto thefts. House Democrats have been led on this issue by Speaker Pro Tem John Lovick, a retired State Patrol officer.

✓ *HB 1001 passed the House 80-16*

Phasing Out Toxic Chemicals

Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) are flame retardant toxins that pollute waterways, including the Puget Sound, and harm human health – with scientific evidence raising grave concerns about how this toxin affects the health of pregnant women and nursing infants. Right now, this harmful chemical is used in couches, computers, televisions, and many other common household items.

✓ *HB 1024: Despite the vote of 23 Republicans in support of this toxin, 71 House members voted to phase out its use in our state.*



Keeping In Touch

Committees:
Local Government (*Chair*)
Insurance, Financial Services & Consumer Protection
Transportation

426 John L. O'Brien Bldg
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
(360) 786-7918

Email: simpson.geoff@leg.wa.gov

Toll-Free Legislative Hotline:
(800) 562-6000
TDD (800) 635-9993

House Democrats also worked together to pass help for families on:

Education

- ✓ Expanding Early Learning programs (HB 1663)
- ✓ Statewide dropout prevention program (HB 1573)
- ✓ Over \$900 million for K-12 education and funding for 8,300 new college and university slots (HB 1128)

Health Care

- ✓ Reforming health care in the state to increase access and affordability for small business employees (HB 1569)
- ✓ Helping seniors cover Medicare Part D costs (HB 1095)
- ✓ Increasing patient safety in hospitals (HB 1156)

Creating Jobs

- ✓ Authorizing funds for a Kent Arena (HB 2388)
- ✓ Creating the Community Development Fund (HB 2325)
- ✓ Helping communities finance projects (HB 1277)